



VOICES OF RIANA

THE VOICES OF YOUTH DURING THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Riana Development Network


Harnessing the future



Riana Development Network (RDN) and Voices of Riana

RDN's mission has been founded on the belief that people only need opportunities and guidance to be able to achieve independence and a reasonable quality of life; RDN ensures that vulnerable people will be afforded such opportunities to gain skills, build confidence and receive support to become independent and make a positive contribution to the communities in which they live.

Sometimes it can be all too easy to lose sight of those for whom we work, the young people themselves. Our relationship with them lies at the core of what we do, and that is why Voices of Riana amidst Covid-19 is so important. It brings together the ideas of young people and provides a platform for their insights and thoughts, an opportunity to share these not only between themselves but also with us and other decision-makers.

Online connectivity has created the means for greater inclusiveness. Young people often see life with clarity, truth and honesty that sometimes gets lost in the adult world. This is evident in the images and poems and seeing so many visual voices speak collectively on an issue is a powerful experience enjoyed by both participant and viewer.

I am reminded once again of the value and immediacy of young people's ideas, views, sometimes angry, sometimes beautiful but always an individual statement of what matters to them and how they have been impacted by Covid-19.

This contribution is enormously relevant, and we can learn from it- in fact, it is our responsibility to do so, and Voices of Riana provides a unique way to make this possible.

Rodgers Orero
Executive Director
Riana Development Network

**"During the lockdown, I have been feeling left
out which is not the way I usually feel.
My friends described me as bubbly,
and I was proud of it.
We have not met for four months now.
We have been acting strange."**

Angela Sanjel

**"I am very sad that all of this
is happening as I can't go to
my gymnastics
and other places where I
go to."**

Jazmine Lloyd

**"People dying, "Well that couldn't be
me". We switched off the TV and got
ready for school;
who knew it would be shut down too."**

Hanan Maxmed

"The voice was interrupted with
the camera
focusing on people fighting for toilet rolls;
People were racing to the stores
to promise themselves
their own hoard of food,
their own treasure chest."

Kaivalya Pullakandam

"But the virus has given us time to reflect;
Time to reflect on human nature;
The wrongs we have gone about doing for the
last few years
Unchecked."

Munia Ahmadi

"The four hands
are representing my family, and
how we are supporting each
other during these times
by being together
and making each other happy."

Anahat Mishra



"Our NHS workers took care of him (Mr Boris Johnson), and he was cured so that he could run this country during these difficult times. My drawing shows NHS defeating the virus."

Anahat Mishra

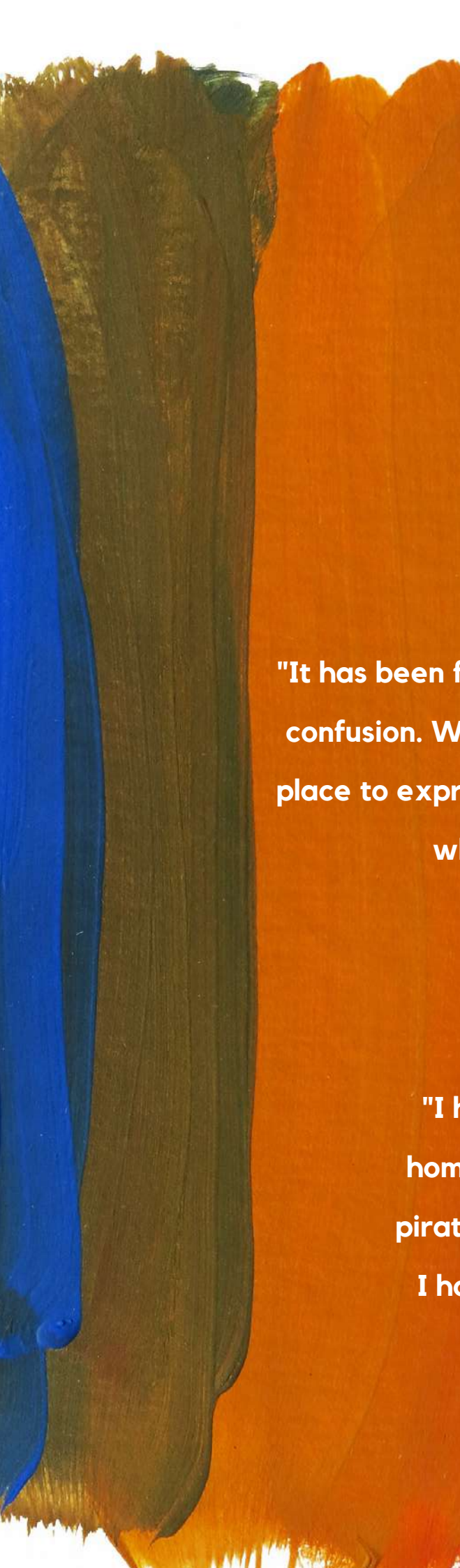
"... looking at the same view and same people drains your sanity and causes stress and anxiety.

It's waking up in the morning and doing the same thing over and over."

Hanan Maxmed

"The day I heard about the Coronavirus, the first thought that hit me was a furious dragon which is coming towards the world rampaging to the surface."

Mihit Dogiparthi



**"COVID-19 is one of mankind's
enemies**

**But suddenly, we once again realise
that so is mankind's greed."**

Munia Ahmadi

**"It has been five months of struggle and
confusion. Writing the poem is my safe
place to express my emotions about the
whole lockdown."**

Hanan Maxmed

**"I have been playing board games at
home. I have invented some games like
pirates, monkeys and masts to pass time.
I hope we will be able to go out again
soon!!"**

Anahat Mishra

Editor's Note	11
<i>Alexander Kwang</i>	
Poems	
The Tale of Two Enemies to Mankind	15
<i>Kaivalya Pullakandam</i>	
Covid-19	19
<i>Munir Ahmadi</i>	
Quaran - Teen	21
<i>Hannan Maxmed</i>	
The Lost Earth	23
<i>Angela Sanjel</i>	
Lockdown	25
<i>Jazmine Lloyd</i>	
Fictions	
Don't Go Out	27
<i>Kaivalya Pullakandam</i>	
How Coronavirus Has Affected Me	29
<i>Jazmine Lloyd</i>	

Drawings

The Four Hands	32
Anahat Mishra	
Superheroes Without Capes	34
Anahat Mishra	
Victory of the Earth	35
Ayaan Juneja	
The Ice Fury	36
Mihit Dogiparthi	
Coronavirus Defeated : We Will Win	39
Puneeth Koram	
Thank You	40
Satgun Kapoor	
We Will Defeat Covid-19	41
Freddie Tomkins	
Acknowledgements	42

Editor's Note

by Alexander Kwang

Before the pandemic, my little piece of heaven at home was composed of three things: in the morning, the daily echoes of rowers making their way along the Thames River; in the afternoon, the melodic chime of the local ice cream truck around the corner; at night, the chatter of bakers as they close their stalls for the day.

During the pandemic, none of these are present. This is a time for us to think, reflect and find the emotions, people and relationships that we truly treasure. Walking my dog, watching a movie and spending time with friends and family is how I savour these moments of peace. For me, this peace represents the importance of solidarity and co-responsibility as a global citizen. I hope that this pandemic can bring us one step further in our pursuit of equality because each and every one of us has been equally affected.

I want to end my little reflection on an optimistic note: Voices of Riana helps me tend to the invisible scars left behind by the pandemic with love and care, and it is my hope that we can all share this essence of humanity.

Introduction

by Alexander Kwang

Everyone wants to be part of history. Our generation, however, did not expect that our little place in history would belong to a pandemic.

I hope that in this time of isolation, we have all been able to carefully reflect on ourselves, the world around us and the values that we care about. This is why I started Voices of Riana, so the many other young people like me, who are being forced to endure such conditions, can express themselves. Voices of Riana is an anthology that aims to provide a platform for youngsters to share all the bitter and sweet moments of living under quarantine.

This is a collection of poems, short prose pieces and art pieces, written by the next generation of the Riana Community: the young children who have all been adversely impacted by the virus. This is their place to share with each other their hopes and fears.

In “Covid-19”, Munia Ahmadi describes how “The virus has given us time to reflect; time to reflect on human nature; the wrongs we have gone about doing for the last few years.” This is our time to stop, reflect, think, and reinvent ourselves. The absolute hiatus of society forces us to reflect on time - which we have lost track of in our struggle to sustain life. Suddenly, thanks to the virus, we have the opportunity to discover who we are and what we value.

Hanan Maxmed’s poem, “Quaran-teen”, has given us a vivid portrayal of how the crisis has affected youngsters as the pandemic worsened. “People dying, well that couldn’t be me. We switched off the TV and got ready for school. Who knew it would be shut down too!” The pandemic has affected each of us in such a profound manner that no one could escape. Alarming headlines descend upon us every day. Even if “we switch off the TV” and carry on with our lives, the disruptive effects of the pandemic will still find a way to wreak havoc in our lives.

In “The Take of Two Enemies to Mankind” by Kaivalya Pullakandam, she compares the pandemic to a plague set during World War II. “We will undergo this pain, and shall suffer, for the lives of our future generations!” Let us remember that the next generation of today will be the future of our society. With schools and extracurricular activities all coming to an abrupt halt, youngsters mourn the loss of time that could be spent hanging out with friends. Nevertheless, we must endure.

This anthology illustrates the struggle of intense emotions from fear and anger to sadness and grief. Expressing our human emotions is highly complex as it can be difficult to be open about how we are feeling by sharing our experience and interacting with others. Please enjoy the Voices of Riana - the voices of youngsters!



POEMS

THE TAKE OF TWO ENEMIES TO MANKIND

BY KAIVALYA PULLAKANDAM

Who Am I?

Hello! My name is Kaivalya Pullakandam, aka Kaivy. I am a 12-year-old who studies Year 7 in Wilson's Grammar School, Wallington. I live in Hounslow. I entered this anthology because I really like to read and write. My other hobbies are playing chess and puzzle games. My favourite one is the Rubik's Cube!!

My Inspiration:

I tried to think for a contrasting yet closely related theme. I found out that the First and Second World War were suitable along with the Great Fire of London and the deadly plague. I had a great understanding of the World Wars, so I went with it. These types of poems have a great effect on the reader and can be very interesting. The poem is narrated from the perspective of someone living in the World War II. I have included the facts that we can relate to at this moment. Hope you enjoy my work!

The Take of Two Enemies to Mankind

It was the first day and the telecast sounded, everywhere
the daunting yet supporting speech rang: "Italy has collapsed and has fallen
under an uncontrollable force, with a fleet of aircrafts set to
bombard London soon. We all can do something,
fellow citizens, let's live for the hurt, let's live for the children and the elderly,
let's live for our fighters on the forefront of our success.
We all shall stay together before any trouble may face us!" Tension
flooded the country, as it was illuminated by bravery and courage.

On the 4th day the tele sounded, everywhere
the omnipresent speech filled the air: "A poisonous plague has conquered
from the seas, a merciless army travelling
through the lands, targeting the lives of the elderly
and the lungs of the vulnerable.
Rejoice! We will undergo this pain, and shall suffer, for the
lives of our future generations! We will all stay inside for our safety and
not travel, we must be careful..." A crown of thrones
injured the country.

The Take of Two Enemies to Mankind

On the 18th day the radio sounded, a squeaky speech
entered our ears: "A disaster fell upon our country, the
Nazi attacked our country, attacking our cities with bombs.
So, stay inside and turn off your lights at night."

The declaration was met with sadness

But also, with happiness – they had found a way to fight back against the enemy.

On the first month the television sounded,
a sad voice

echoed through the streets: "Italy has tested positive, its
invisible enemy conquering through Europe, leaving
many organisations underfinanced.

Life shall carry on as normal-

as we have not seen a major impact yet.

Here is our rule:

Be within two metres of another – exceptions include
homes, schools, workplaces, dentists, pools..."

"The voice was drowned out with murmurs, with some words understandable
and some not..."

The Take of Two Enemies to Mankind

On the thirty-ninth, the television sounded, and a quiet voice filled the air:
“Workers fall ill and begin to go home in the middle of shifts,
affecting the shelves in the supermarkets which are abundant in supplies...”
The voice was interrupted with the camera focusing on people fighting for toilet rolls.
People were racing to the stores to promise
themselves their own hoard of food, their own treasure chest.

In the second month, a siren rang throughout the cities
and the citizens emerged from their
homes like turtles peeking out from their shells. There would be a
bombing soon.
They all went to the underground bunkers. In their damp and dark
stay, not a single sound could be heard.

It was the end of it all.
Weary workers went back to their occupation, they sighed
The government ecstatically exclaimed that peace was restored.
Maybe it was not so bad.



COVID-19

BY MUNIR AHMADI

Who Am I?

Munir is a Year 13 student studying at Westminster School in London.

An unknown virus has forced us inside
With many of our fellow humans having died
Family members have been separated
People all over are agitated

No one knows why this has happened
All we hope for is for the curve to be flattened
We have all been stuck inside hopeless
While many of the world leaders lead soulless

The tragedies families face
The fear, sadness and panic that fills us
This invisible killer, extinguishing the last glimmers of hope for mankind
Many communities and livelihoods have been wrecked

But the virus has given us time to reflect
Time to reflect on human nature
The wrongs we have gone about doing for the last few years
Unchecked

Some things, however, improve
We see the plants, the trees and the animals all at peace
Nature distanced from men
How much more do we need to see to realise we are the problem?

Yet the world still crumbles slowly.
As we see blazed on our screens,
the injustices our fellow black brothers and sisters face.
The refugees fleeing whilst the elites profit
The rich benefiting from the suffering of the poor
Humans being denied basic rights due to their geographical location
The injustices all over angering us.

COVID 19 is one of mankind's enemies
But suddenly, we once again realise that so is mankind's greed.

QUARAN - TEEN

BY HANAN MAXMED

**Watching the news, not knowing what's to come
A virus in Wuhan affecting old and young.
Locked in the house with no negotiation
Was this really a cause for celebration?**

**The virus was recognized as Covid-19
People dying, "Well that couldn't be me"
We switched off the TV and got ready for school
Who knew it would be shut down too.**

**Children and teens screaming with delight
Jumping high with all their might.
I came back home and watched TV again
To find out the death rate was 210.**

**Now it's 45,000 the deaths of the disease
Who knew the virus was a vicious, murderous beast.
Sisters losing their brothers, fathers losing their sons
That once broad smile turned to officially none.**

**The eyes filled with joy turned to sadness
Bright blue skies turned to darkness
2020 a year to remember
Covid-19 is still out there, with a short temper.**

Who am I?

My name is Hanan
Maxmed. I am a Year 8
student studying at
Heathland School in
Houslow.



My Inspiration

It's not the matter of being inspired. It is a matter of expressing how I feel about the pandemic.

The coronavirus has changed lives worldwide and has even ended some. So far, it has been five months of struggle and confusion. Writing the poem is my safe place to express my emotions about the whole lockdown.

Staying at home might feel like an easy task but every day, looking at

the same view and same people drains your sanity and causes stress and anxiety. It's waking up in the morning and doing the same thing over and over.

My heart goes to the people who had survived the virus or lost loved ones. I wish the best for everyone.

THE LOST EARTH

BY ANGELA SANJEL

Who Am I?

Angela is a Year 5 student. She has a lovely 4-year-old sister who she loves playing with. During the lockdown, she volunteered in a nursery as she enjoys being around children. She loves writing poems and short stories. She also loves playing the guitar and has already performed at the Royal Albert Hall in London for the Hounslow Central Guitar ensemble.

My Inspiration:

My writing is like dancing. I express what I have been through by writing, just like how dancers do the same with dancing. During the lockdown, I have been feeling left out which is not the way I usually feel. My friends described me as bubbly, and I was proud of it. We have not met for four months now, and we have been acting strange. We video call and chat on social media, which is a wonderful way to communicate during a pandemic like this. My poem is about how left out the whole world is feeling, and how things have been different. The moral of the poem is that things do change and it's OK.

THE LOST EARTH

We need to wish,
We need to plea,
If only life was quiet
I would be sleeping peacefully.

Soon when dark appears,
Everything is quiet,
and now I regret this,
I really do
Oh Earth, proper Earth,
I “really” miss you.

"I would like to say “Thank You” to all key workers and the people who are staying home."

LOCKDOWN

BY JAZMINE LLOYD

Lockdown is a scary time
So I decided to write a rhyme
Put a smile on lots of faces
From around the world in lots of places.

Who Am I?
I am a Year 8
student studying at
Chiswick School.

Watching movies on Disney Plus
Stops us making lots of fuss
Eating ice-cream in the garden
Makes us burp but we say pardon.

Missing our friends and all our teachers
Watching YouTube to see what features.
In the videos that set us challenges,
Hope no one fails and ends up in bandages.

One day when this will come to an end
Hopefully we won't have driven them round the bend
We will look back and see the thought
Of the lessons we learnt and the ones we were taught.



PROSE



DON'T GO OUT

BY KAIVALYA PULLAKANDAM

Fear settled on me like a dark fog, bringing a chill that crept over me and that no amount of heat could drive away. A deep sigh escaped me, followed by a succession of sneezes.

"I should never have driven all the way to Devon, just to go to see Philip," I scolded myself. You see, I went to see my best friend, Philip, who then took me to McDonald's. We enjoyed a burger each and said our farewells. From then on it started.

My fickle fingers tried to reach out for my phone. I searched everywhere until I found it in my rucksack.

"What are the symptoms of COVID-19?" I hesitantly typed as I could feel the unbearable pain in my throat from all those coughs.

Uh oh! Here comes another cough. I let out another series of loud coughs.

A fever with continuous cough," it beeped. The words juddered on the screen, along with 100-page reports. Normally, like the lazy kid I am, I would have just skipped through it but for the first time I read through it.

With no further ado, hastily I checked the temperature of my forehead, with the rear of my hand. Hypersensitivity kicked in. I was burning. I could feel the heat and the pain building up, along with the tension. All of a sudden, I felt uneasy. Something was gnawing at my stomach and fluttering as if I had swallowed a butterfly.

My brother noticed my frightened glance on my face.

“Isolate yourself, away from us. Never come back,” he said mockingly with a grin on his face

As the warmth of the water gushed down my throat, I tried to recall every house remedy that I could try: cloves, garlic, turmeric, pepper, cinnamon. Anything to help look after me.

It was after three weeks when I finally got better.

As I sat leisurely on sofa watching the TV, my nose started to tickle. After 20 seconds, I coughed again. Maybe I shouldn't of went out just for 3 hours.

Uh no! It came back...

HOW CORONAVIRUS HAS AFFECTED ME

BY JAZMINE LLOYD

Coronavirus (aka Covid-19) has affected me because we are not allowed to go out as much, visit friends, go to parks and more.

This is so annoying because we have to stay six feet apart from everyone and some people just forget to do it.

There is barely anything to do inside of your home.

I am grateful the NHS is working their best to help people, so that is very good.

It is ok to go outdoors for fresh air and exercise to walk your dog, go for a hike or ride your bike, for example. The point is not for you to remain inside, but to avoid being in close contact with people.

We can also leave the house for medicines or other things you need.

I am very sad that all of this happening as I can't go to my gymnastics and other places where I go to.



DRAWINGS

THE FOUR HANDS & SUPERHEROES WITHOUT CAPES

BY ANAHAT MISHRA

Who Am I?

Hello, I am Anahat Mishra. I am 8 years old and live in the Hounslow borough.

Last few months have been very strange for all of us. Everyone is scared of this virus which has spread across the world. We all are staying in our homes to stay safe, but there are people who need to work to keep us safe.

I am really thankful to the NHS workers who are risking their lives to save the rest of us. If it wasn't for the NHS, coronavirus would have taken over the United Kingdom.

I have been playing board games at home. I have invented some games like pirates, monkeys and masts to pass time. I hope we will be able to go out again soon!!!

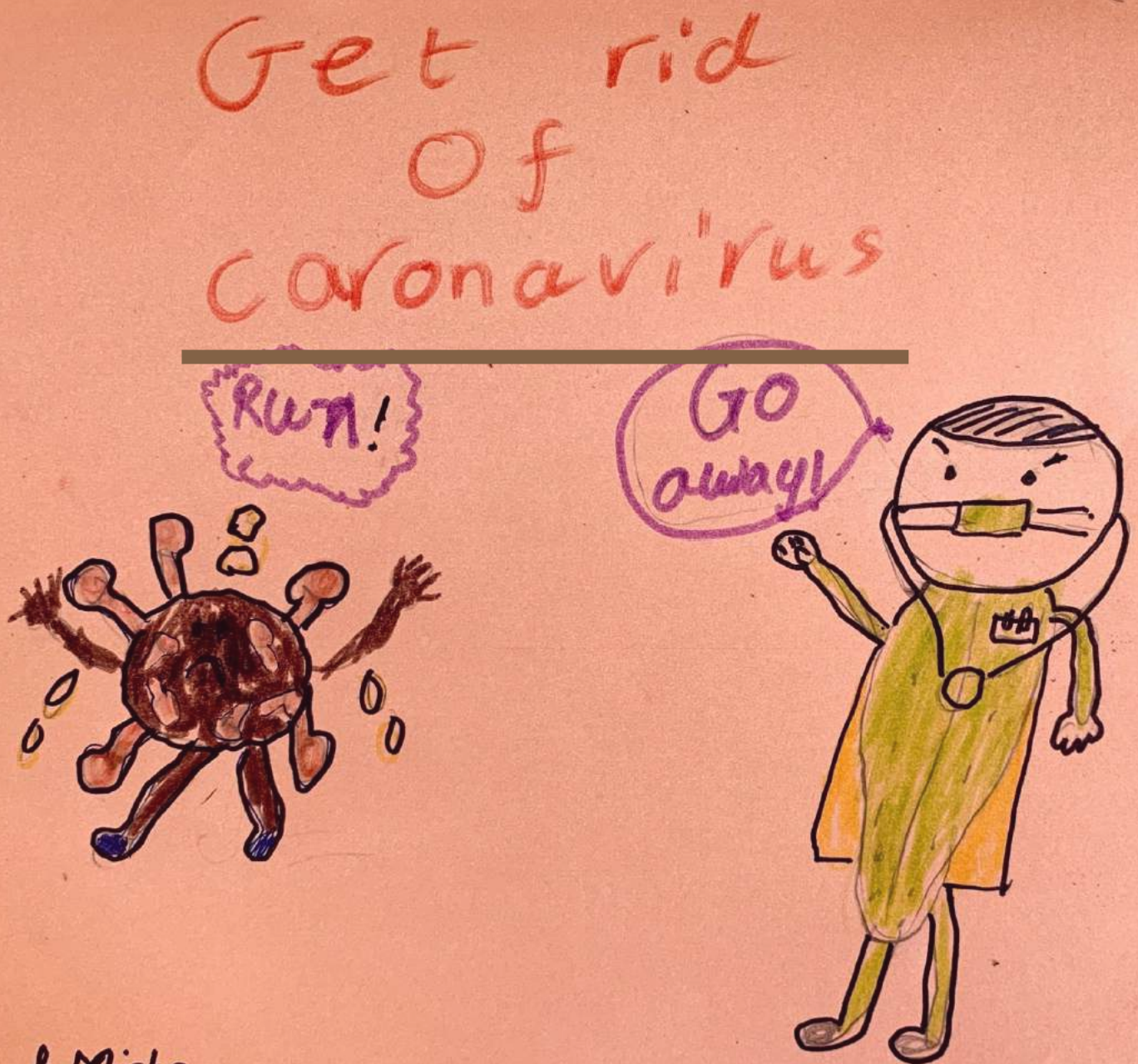


The Four Hands

"The rainbow represents the happy times which come after the grey and gloomy clouds. The four hands are representing my family, and how we are supporting each other during these times by being together and making each other happy."

SUPERHEROES WITHOUT CAPES

I had made this poster when our Prime Minister Mr Boris Johnson got this virus, and he was admitted to a hospital. Our NHS workers took care of him, and he was cured so that he could run this country during these difficult times. My drawing shows NHS defeating the virus.



Anahat Mishra
8 years
😊

Support our
34
NHS

VICTORY OF THE EARTH

BY AYAAN JUNEJA

Who Am I?

My name is Ayaan Juneja. I go to Spring Grove Primary School. This lockdown has been challenging for all, but I tried to utilise this period the best way with my family.

I am thankful to my teacher, she kept us engaged through many assignment every week through Google classroom. I baked many things with the help of my parents such as cupcakes and muffins. I also made jelly for my family which they thoroughly enjoyed.

Favourite time pass in this lockdown was to play football and cricket with my dad and of course playing on the piano.

I have also enjoyed reading Roald Dahl's books in this lockdown. I recently developed my interest in drawing. Thanks to the YouTube, I have learned different forms of art.

I hope "Together we will fight against COVID-19". This time shall pass soon and we will go back to our normal life until then **STAY ALERT/ CONTROL THE VIRUS/ SAVE LIVES.**



This art piece represents a victory of the Earth against the deadly Corona Virus.

Everyone needs to be patient.

This shall pass, and we will surely win against this virus. Meanwhile, everyone please follow government advice: Stay Alert - Control The Virus -Save Lives.

THE ICE FURY

BY MIHIT DOGIPARTHY

Who Am I?

My name is Mihit. I am a Year 5 student from Fairholme Primary School in Feltham. My favourite subject is maths. I love drawing dragons and animals which can fly.

My hobbies are swimming, drawing and playing video games. I also love playing with guns, and I have a collection of them.

My Inspiration:

The day I heard about the Coronavirus, the first thought that hit me was a furious dragon (Ice fury) which is coming towards the world rampaging to the surface. When I thought of the dreadful Coronavirus and its effects, I felt shivering throughout and as if the ice fury was firing ice breath viciously on me.



**"I am just wishing that this pandemic should end
and
all our lives get better soon."**

CORONAVIRUS DEFEATED: WE WILL WIN

BY AYAAN JUNEJA

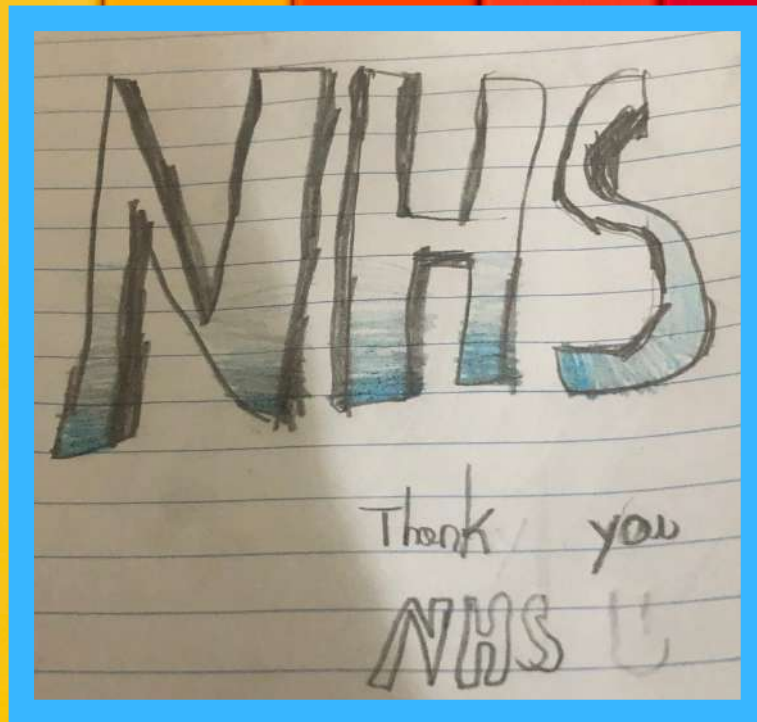


Hi, my name is Puneeth. I'm in Year 3, and I'm 8 years old. I study at Chatsworth Primary School. I love drawing and doing clay models. I draw a picture of coronavirus with doctors fighting it. Finally, they defeat it by finding a vaccine.

"Coronavirus is very bad but we can surely win if we fight this battle together."

THANK YOU: NHS

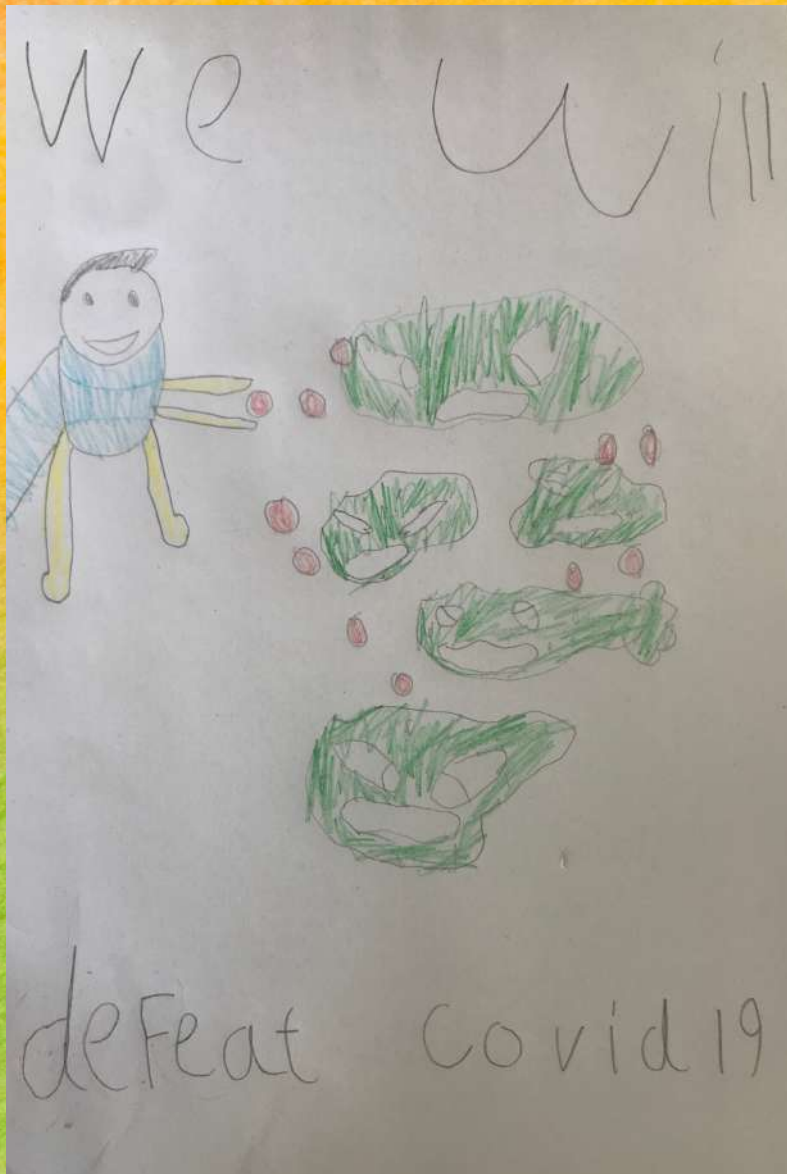
BY SATGUN KAPOOR



My Name Is Satgun. I am In Year 3. I am 8 years old. My hobbies are drawing and playing games. I live In Hounslow. I go to Khalsa Primary School. I have two sisters. I am Sikh. I am In quarantine with my parents and my sister at home.

WE WILL DEFEAT COVID-19

BY FREDDIE TOMKINS



**"We are all
superheroes
trying to fight this
together and that
we will win."**

My name is
Freddie Tomkins. I am 9 years
old.

I love drawing especially
superheroes. This is my
picture of a superhero killing
Covid-19.

Acknowledgements

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